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New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 42 (*continued*)

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/94)

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour to take the floor when you, Sir, are presiding over the General Assembly.

Argentina welcomes the condolences and displays of solidarity regarding the attack in New York yesterday. We express our condolences to all the victims — five of whom were Argentines — including citizens of Belgium and the United States. Argentina reaffirms its strong condemnation of terrorist attacks and violence in all its manifestations. We reiterate the need to increase the fight against that scourge.

I will now move on to the issue at hand. At the outset, I wish to welcome the presence today of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and to thank him for his very detailed statement this morning (see A/72/PV.38).

Argentina fully aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/72/PV.38), and wishes to make the following points in our national capacity.

Argentina's historical position has been that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba must be urgently lifted and is contrary to international law, in particular to the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in internal affairs, freedom of commerce and international navigation and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Within the framework of our absolute commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and to multilateralism, Argentina opposes the use of unilateral coercive measures, the extraterritorial implementation of national laws and the adoption of discriminatory commercial practices. In this regard, Argentina has traditionally supported resolutions of the General Assembly against the embargo and has spoken against it whenever the subject has arisen, in both regional forums and other international organizations.

The Government of Argentina welcomed the process initiated by the Governments of Cuba and the United States at the end of 2014 to normalize bilateral relations. While we welcomed the executive orders implemented by the United States Department of the Treasury and the Department of Commerce in 2015 and 2016, which introduced amendments to regulations on the subject, we note with concern that they contrast with those announced on 16 June 2017 that reverse some of

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the aforementioned measures and seek to reinforce the implementation of the embargo.

We also regret that the laws underpinning the embargo are still in effect. Their implementation continues to impede the full development of the Cuban people. The adoption of resolution 72/4 by a large majority reaffirms the unequivocal message of the international community that the embargo against Cuba must be lifted. Argentina reaffirms its conviction that a dialogue without preconditions between both parties that involves the mutual recognition of both Governments as legitimate and equal interlocutors will resolve all pending problems between the United States and Cuba, including the lifting of the embargo.

Mr. Kamau (Kenya): Kenya would like to align itself with the statements made earlier this morning by the representative of Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; and the representative of Gabon, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/72/PV.38).

Kenya has always believed that sanctions and blockades are a crude and irresponsible instrument of unilateral or collective international action and diplomacy. Our twenty-first-century global civilization should never condone the use of such crude and indiscriminate instruments for international diplomacy as unilateral sanctions or blockades. Sadly, unilateral sanctions and blockades continue to attract the attention of the powerful and the dominant. Let us be clear — such sanctions and blockades are prejudicial and purely politically self-serving. They serve no multilateral purpose and, in fact, frustrate and undermine multilateral solutions. Furthermore, as we have seen, more often than not, sanctions serve to entrench those whom they ostensibly target.

As we all know, tragically and inevitably, in the long run sanctions and blockades are unsustainable and poorly enforceable. Moreover, the suffering and pain they cause rarely, if ever, justify the perceived injustice that motivated their initial application. If truth be told, only the unilateral enforcer takes any political capital and satisfaction from unilateral sanctions and/or blockades, but little else. At best, sanctions expose the vulnerability of those subjected to them, who are, for the most part, the poor and the defenceless. The United Nations is a body that needs to hold itself to a higher ideal than that which condones the crude choice and use of untargeted, horizonless unilateral sanctions and blockades.

The United Nations should hold itself up to an ideal that does not demonstrate implicitly that a Member State with overwhelming power can be a unilateral enforcer of sanctions or blockades. Indeed, what the United Nations holds itself up to should be an ideal that should never demonstrate that the weak can suffer sanctions or blockades without recourse and almost without end.

Those conditions are already true and met before unilateral sanctions or blockades by a powerful entity are selected and implemented. Moreover, the United Nations should never uphold any sanctions or blockades that do not meet the threshold of precision and swift and determinative action. Neither should sanctions and blockades be prejudicial to and discriminatory against a Member State simply because that Member State does not adhere to the cultural values or political ideals of another Member State or a group of Member States.

In the case of the tragic and seemingly perennial unilateral sanctions and blockade levelled against the Republic of Cuba, it seems to my delegation that history has become our political and diplomatic prisoner. Surely we know better. We need not be consumed by habit or our political imperatives. Why must we allow our historical habit to become a determinant of our current action? That would be truly tragic.

We all know that the point of the unilateral sanctions and blockade against Cuba has already been made many times over throughout the years. Last year, in this very Hall, the enforcer of those sanctions acknowledged that they and the blockade finally needed to be lifted. Some 191 Member States agreed by voting for resolution 71/5 last year. My delegation believes that the time to end the sanctions and blockade against Cuba is indeed long past. Let the people of Cuba be free to join the collective of international citizenry and enjoy the same unhindered social, economic and political freedoms that the rest of us enjoy. Let us not let sanctions and blockades — unilateral or otherwise — stand in their way. Let us not let sanctions become the instrument that we or anyone else uses to leave Cuba behind. It is for those reasons that Kenya voted in favour of resolution 72/4.

Mr. Mounzer (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned

Countries, and by the representative of the Republic of Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/72/PV.38).

We wish to present the following explanation of vote in our national capacity. We welcome the presence of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, a friendly country, and we reaffirm Syria's support for the Government and our friends, the people of Cuba, as they confront the decades-long, unjust embargo imposed by the United States.

We also congratulate Cuba on the significant diplomatic victory achieved today, which reflects the international community's rejection of the injustice that Cuba has suffered for 55 years. It is also a clear illustration of the lack of regard that the United States has for international law and of its stubbornness in implementing barbaric policies involving embargoes, punishments and unilateral coercive and economic measures against States that refuse to become its satellites and accept its dictates, while defending their independence and national sovereignty.

The international community had optimistically welcomed the previous United States Administration's policy concerning Cuba, as it believed that it might one day lead to a lifting of the unjust embargo against the Cuban people. The current American Administration has shown once again that the political doctrine of the establishment in power in the United States is incapable of changing and that it will continue to act based on the logic of the primacy of military force and economic influence with a view to imposing its hegemony throughout the entire world, breaking the will of free countries and bringing freedom- and dignity-loving people to their knees.

Such unilateral coercive economic measures constitute a collective punishment imposed on an entire population. They undermine the United Nations system and impede it from carrying out its legitimate mandates. Furthermore, they pose a major obstacle to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They also hinder trade operations and the enjoyment of human rights. The Governments of Member States that resort to illegal blockades and unilateral coercive economic measures must begin to understand that those unjust policies have only led to the rejection of the West. They provide extremist and terrorist movements with a new weapon for recruiting from among the weak, who are the most affected by such illegal unilateral measures, thereby increasing tensions in international relations and threatening international peace and security.

For those reasons, the Syrian Arab Republic voted in favour of resolution 72/4. Syria calls on the General Assembly to act in accordance with the provisions and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as its own relevant resolutions, with a view to implementing effective mechanisms to end such aggressive practices, policies involving embargoes, and unilateral economic measures, which run contrary to international law. Moreover, my country calls for the implementation of sound mechanisms that would hold accountable Member States that resort to illegal economic embargoes, which, owing to their political, financial and legal repercussions, have disastrous consequences for the economies of the countries targeted by such embargoes. The latter paralyse and destroy sensitive economic sectors that provide for the basic needs of the population, namely, health care, education, nutrition, agriculture, industry, trade, technology and communications.

My country demands that the blockade imposed by the United States of America be lifted. We also demand an end to unilateral measures imposed by the United States of America, the European Union and other States against many other Member States, including the Syrian Arab Republic. Such unilateral coercive and aggressive measures are preventing Syrians from accessing basic services, such as food, medicine, education, and medical, agricultural and industrial equipment, as well as spare parts for civil aviation and telecommunications equipment. Such measures constitute a major human rights violation and have led to huge losses for the economy, thereby undermining efforts to combat terrorism.

In conclusion, one question remains unanswered: how can the Governments of some Member States reconcile their statements delivered in this Hall in which they call for the rejection of the embargo imposed against Cuba and other States with their policies aimed at putting humanitarian, economic and social pressure on various other nations through the use of illegal economic embargoes against the peoples which I just mentioned.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation strongly condemns the heinous act of

terrorism that took place yesterday in New York City and expresses its condolences and sympathy to the families of all of the victims.

I shall now present the Assembly with the following explanation of vote on resolution 72/4.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba runs counter to the principles of international law governing relations among States and contradicts the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, which calls for promoting solidarity, cooperation and friendly relations among nations, and for the resolution of disputes and problems among countries through peaceful means and dialogue, based on equality and mutual respect for the sovereignty of Member States.

The decades-long embargo has seriously jeopardized the legitimate rights and interests of Cuba and other States, as well as the freedom of trade and navigation, and serves no other purpose than to inflict tremendous hardship and suffering on the people of Cuba, especially women and children. It must therefore be lifted immediately, as requested by the General Assembly in all relevant resolutions, including the one just adopted today (resolution 72/4).

Furthermore, inasmuch as the international community faces major challenges such as food crises, increased poverty, unemployment and malnutrition, the imposition of the embargo seems more unjustifiable and inhumane than ever and deserves stronger objections at the international level. Additionally, the adoption of General Assembly resolutions on the subject over the course of so many years — and with such a wide range of support — indicates the strong objection of the international community to unilateral economic coercive measures in general and to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba in particular. Calls to put an end to that unlawful and inhumane embargo are a sign of increasing sympathy for the Government and the people of Cuba.

Cuba is not the only country that is suffering from United States sanctions. Unjustified sanctions introduced or imposed under various false pretexts by the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past four decades — even after the agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its endorsement by the Security Council — continue to target innocent people and obstruct their basic rights. Regrettably, unilateral coercive measures have become a consistent element of the policies of the United States, even where a Security Council resolution has clearly prohibited it.

Considering the fact that such unilateral sanctions are contrary to the principles of international law, the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and peaceful coexistence among them, the Islamic Republic of Iran remains opposed to the application of unilateral economic and trade measures by the United States of America against other countries. We are also opposed to the extraterritorial application and effects of such national legislation on the sovereignty of other States and on free trade among nations. We emphasize the urgent need to put an end to such erroneous policies and measures, as well as the need to ensure the full implementation of the provisions of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 72/4, adopted today.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): Our delegation also aligns itself with the statements of other delegations in strongly condemning the terrorist attack yesterday in downtown Manhattan. We express our condolences to the families of the victims and wish those who were injured a speedy recovery.

Allow me to begin by extending a word of welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. The Republic of Angola associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Gabon, on behalf of the Group of African States; the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; and the representative of Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/72/PV.38).

Angola voted in favour of resolution 72/4, adopted today by the Assembly, because it considers the persistence of the unjust and severe economic, commercial and financial embargo, unilaterally imposed by the United States against Cuba for more than 55 years, to be a retrograde measure inflicting severe damage on the Cuban people, especially those that are most vulnerable. Angola expected the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries to encourage the American authorities to take further measures towards putting an end to the embargo and to show respect for the Cuban people, who have freely exercised their right to decide on their own political

and economic system in order to ensure the sustainable development of the island.

The extraterritorial nature of the embargo is reflected in the financial persecution directed against certain other countries' banks and the imposition of new fines on institutions for violating the rules imposed by the United States Government with regard to Cuba. That causes severe obstacles to the economic, cultural and social development of the island and has a significant negative impact on several sensitive sectors such as public health, which severely affects the well-being of the Cuban people. In that context, we regret the measures announced by the current Trump Administration that impose additional obstacles on the already limited trade opportunities between Cuba and the United States.

Angola reaffirms its commitment to respecting, preserving and promoting the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law, which provide for access to multilateralism and to collective efforts to maintain international peace and security, economic growth and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. My country recognizes and once again congratulates the Secretary-General on his efforts aimed at ending the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

In that connection, Angola reiterates its unconditional support for the implementation of the recommendations contained in resolution 71/5, of 26 October 2016, on the topic before us today. I take this opportunity to appeal once again to the international community to renew its efforts to promote a constructive and transparent dialogue between the two countries in order to achieve the objectives set out in relevant resolutions on the matter.

The progress achieved in 2015 and 2016 showed that Cuba and the United States can coexist in a cordial manner with respect for their differences. In conclusion, Angola encourages the United States and Cuba to continue to work to build a relationship based on dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect for the benefit of both countries and their peoples.

Mr. Phansourivong (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I would like to express our deepest condolences to the United States, Argentina and Belgium for the loss of human life in the wake of the terrorist act that occurred yesterday in lower Manhattan, New York City. We condemn that heinous attack.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Ecuador and Singapore on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively (see A/72/PV.38).

The Lao People's Democratic Republic voted in favour of resolution 72/4 in order to reaffirm our position that the imposition of the unilateral embargo on Cuba, with its extraterritorial implications, has not only hindered the socioeconomic development of that nation, but has also contradicted the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as the sovereign equality of States and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomes the progress achieved over the past few years on the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Cuba and the United States, including the reopening of the embassies in the respective capitals of both countries. However, it is regrettable to see that the progress made through years of effort has now been compromised. Nevertheless, we hope that the embargo on Cuba will be lifted, as we firmly believe that the lifting of the embargo will not only be beneficial to both countries, but will also benefit the region and the world at large.

Mr. Castro Cordoba (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We join others in condemning the cowardly terrorist attack that took place here in New York City on 31 October and express our solidarity with the United States, Argentina and Belgium for the irreparable loss of human life.

My country associates itself with the interventions made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/72/PV.38). In addition, in our national capacity, we wish to reiterate the reasons why we voted in favour of resolution 72/4. We also welcome Foreign Minister Rodríguez Parrilla.

Costa Rica wishes to highlight once again the historic and significant progress that has taken place since 2014 through the process of the improvement and re-establishment of bilateral ties between the United States and Cuba. In that spirit, my country encourages

the parties to maintain the agreements reached, to encourage further bilateral dialogue between the two parties and to replace the blockade, which has been in place for more than 55 years, with a fraternal meeting of the peoples in all areas of economic, social, technological and political cooperation.

In strict respect for international law and the principles on which the Charter of the United Nations is based and consistent with its foreign policy, Costa Rica reiterates its rejection of the unilateral and extraterritorial measures that a State may apply against another by imposing its own laws and regulations on third countries. Over the past few years, Costa Rica and Cuba have continued to strengthen their diplomatic relations in the fields of politics, economics and cooperation. Through the visit of the delegation of Costa Rica to Cuba in 2015, bilateral trade and cooperation in areas such as higher education, technical cooperation and scientific exchange, sports and health have been promoted.

In the same vein, in March, a memorandum of understanding on science, technology and innovation was signed between Costa Rica and Cuba in order to promote and facilitate a cooperative relationship in such matters. That memorandum is an example of the constant dialogue between the two countries to work together to coordinate development in order to support and complement the programmes for strengthening human talent, with agreement on priority areas so as to be able to align efforts and achieve common objectives.

We live in an interconnected world in which solidarity and respect must be the basis of our exchanges. We cannot face the problems of the present by constantly reusing the tools of the past, especially if they have not been effective. The Organization, through the General Assembly, has manifested, clearly and forcefully, its disapproval of the blockade. It is time to definitively end it and build bridges between nations and peoples.

I would like to conclude with the words spoken by the President of the Republic, Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, in his statement during the recent general debate:

> "In that regard, considering that unilateral economic sanctions are not efficient ways to punish Governments but can seriously harm the rights of peoples to well-being and development, I once again would like to express the opposition of my country to the embargo that the United States has imposed against Cuba for 55 years, with high human, economic and social costs for its population" (*A/72/PV.5, p. 24*).

Costa Rica hopes that the blockade will soon be lifted.

Mr. Rahmanto (Indonesia): I would like to express our sympathy and condolences to the people and the Government of the United States, as well to the peoples and the Governments of Argentina and Belgium, in the wake of the horrendous attack in New York City on 31 October. We condemn all acts of terrorism.

Indonesia aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/72/PV.38).

Indonesia would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/72/94) on today's agenda item.

After more than five decades, we are still witnessing the detrimental impacts of the long-standing embargo on the lives of the Cuban people. As a consequence of the embargo, the Cuban people have been left behind. Cuba has been unable to realize its full potential and improve its economic, trade and financial relations with the rest of the world. It has been unable to exercise its full rights to reach for broader economic opportunities or build high-quality public health care and education. In that respect, there has been virtually unanimous support on the part of Member States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

The policy of the United States in 2015 and 2016 was encouraging and generated hope that the peoples of Cuba and the United States could live together in an amicable environment, respecting their differences while being able to cooperate for the benefit of the two countries and peoples. It is therefore disheartening to witness new measures being put in place that are aimed at further tightening the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Today, Indonesia joined the majority of Member States in voting in favour of resolution 72/4. Indonesia reaffirms its fundamental belief that the continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba contradicts the main principles of international law, including the Charter of the United

Nations, the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States, the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of non-intervention in States' domestic affairs, and international humanitarian law. Indonesia would like to emphasize that the application of the embargo defies the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which urges States to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that impede the full achievement of economic and social development.

To conclude, Indonesia would like to reiterate our support for the rights of the Cuban people to enjoy full freedom in their economic and social development. Towards that goal, we call for dialogue and cooperation as essential elements required for lifting the embargo against Cuba.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): The Namibian delegation joins others in extending our heartfelt condolences to the victims, families and friends of those who perished in yesterday's attack here in New York. We condemn that terrorist attack in the strongest terms.

Namibia also wishes to extend a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, for being here with us today.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Venezuela, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; the representative of Gabon, on behalf of the Group of African States; and the representative of Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/72/PV.38).

Namibia wants to put on record its appreciation for the Secretary-General's report (A/72/94) on the implementation of resolution 71/5.

In this house of the people, the people have spoken with a loud voice. Today's vote condemning this long-standing injustice reconfirms the strong resolve of the majority of Member States not to be silenced. We stand resolute in our solidarity with the Cuban people and in our firm belief in and support for multilateralism. If what we, the people of the world, want most is peace and security and the well-being of the citizens of world through the pursuit of our development agenda, then surely a policy of exclusion, a policy of economic and commercial embargo against a people who stand head and shoulders above many of us with respect to showing genuine support through selfless cooperation in the fields of health and development, flies in the face of the principles and values for which we all stand. It undermines our collective efforts to make the world a better place.

For 55 years, Cuba and the Cuban people have been victim of this unfair and unnecessary action. The economic, commercial and financial blockade is contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It violates the rights of the Cuban people to health and food, and their rights to education, sports and culture and to development. It also severely impacts the Cuban economy. It affects both foreign trade and investments, as well as the finances of the country. In the past year, as in previous years, the income denied to the people and the Government of Cuba derived from the export of goods and services remained the most impacted by the embargo.

As Hurricane Irma tore through the Caribbean in early September, Cuba faced its first category-5 hurricane since 1937. Many homes were destroyed, the electrical grid was severely damaged, and the agricultural sector was heavily impacted. Water services were also damaged. The economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba will severely impact the recovery of the island in the aftermath of such a massive natural disaster. Surely, the natural humanitarian reaction should be to lift the embargo in order to allow the Cubans to rebuild their island.

At this time last year we marked a historic day with the adoption of resolution 71/5, in which both the United States and Israel abstained for the first time. Indeed, we were all encouraged by such forward movement, as well as by the improved relations earlier in 2016. Former President Obama recognized that the blockade was a failed and obsolete policy that should be terminated, and prior to his departure, he urged the United States Congress to end it.

We were disheartened by the announcement on 17 June of the new policy of the new Government of the United States towards Cuba with the signing of the directive entitled, "National Security Presidential Memorandum on Strengthening the Policy of the United States towards Cuba". That directive puts forward new measures to tighten the blockade against Cuba. It reverses the positive steps taken by the previous Administration and marks a setback in the bilateral relations between the two nations. We express our

disappointment at those new tightened measures taken by the Government of the United States. We urge the United States to reconsider those new measures.

We remain hopeful that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba will be fully lifted, that relations will improve and that the two countries will restore full economic activities to their mutual benefit. Namibia wishes to put on record once again its full support for resolution 72/4.

Ms. Khyne (Myanmar): I would like to express our profound condolences to the families of the victims of yesterday's terrorist attack in lower Manhattan and our solidarity with the United States, Argentina and Belgium. We condemn all acts of terrorism.

I am taking the floor to explain my delegation's position on resolution 72/4, which was just adopted by a large majority of Member States.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; Singapore, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; and Venezuela, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/72/PV.38).

It has been more than five decades since the sanctions against Cuba were imposed and more than two decades since this item was put on the agenda of the United Nations. The General Assembly has adopted resolutions on this agenda item with an overwhelming majority of votes in favour annually. Yet, the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba has not been lifted.

Myanmar has joined the majority of Member States every year to vote in favour of the resolution in order to demonstrate once again our firm rejection of the unilateral coercive measure before us today, namely, the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, which has hindered efforts by the Cuban people to eradicate poverty, promote their economic and social development, and achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) clearly outline the overall need to work towards leaving no one behind.

As a country that has experienced similar unilateral sanctions in the past, Myanmar fully understands that the imposition of sanctions on developing countries can cause great economic hardships, especially to the poor and vulnerable populations in those countries. Myanmar believes in the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as in the norms of international law and good-neighbourliness. Nations should be guided by the principles enshrined in those guidelines, which stress the need to coexist, respect differences, promote prosperity and ensure safety.

Myanmar, together with the international community, has consistently demonstrated that the embargo, as a unilateral measure, is inconsistent with international law, transgresses fundamental humanitarian principles and contravenes the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, it is not in line with the letter and spirit of the SDGs.

Myanmar is of the view that an immediate end to the economic embargo against Cuba is necessary and that such an end will serve to promote the economic and social development of the people of Cuba. In that regard, we urge that the embargo and coercive measures be replaced by dialogue and cooperation. For those reasons, as in previous years, Myanmar has once again voted in favour of the resolution on this topic, in the hope that it will lead to the betterment of the relationship between Cuba and the United States, as well as the prosperity of the entire international community.

Ms. Fedorovich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to express our deepest condolences to the United States in connection with the terrorist act that occurred yesterday, as well as to Argentina and Belgium, which also lost citizens in that attack.

Belarus voted in favour of resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (see A/72/PV.38). Belarus has consistently been against the use of unilateral sanctions in foreign policy, and we believe that it is unacceptable to use measures of economic coercion that contravene the principles of international law. We consider such economic sanctions to be a method of political pressure against sovereign States.

In that connection, we stress that the positive steps undertaken in 2015 and 2016 by the United States and Cuba as part of the process of normalizing bilateral relations contributed to the easing of the unilateral coercive pressure on Cuba. That process gave the

international community hope that the long-standing economic embargo against the island of freedom would end. We saw a clear example of how resolving the situation in a civilized way, based on mutual respect and cooperation and on an equal footing, is not only possible but can be done very quickly.

That clearly demonstrates that the principle of the peaceful resolution of disputes is the correct and only way forward. We hope that that constructive process will continue in spite of the maintenance, and even the recent strengthening, of the restrictive measures against Cuba, including plans to introduce additional sanctions to the existing trade embargo. That situation not only has a negative impact on the development of the Cuban economy and the citizens of Cuba but also affects inhabitants of the United States.

Belarus remains committed to the need to resolve disputes between nations through realistic dialogue, as opposed to a policy of economic and political pressure of sanctions. We have stated repeatedly that attempts by some States to change the domestic political system of others through the use of military, political, economic or other means of pressure are unacceptable. Belarus calls for the full, comprehensive and irreversible end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba by the United States.

Mr. Miangar (Chad) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of Chad, I would like to join all other delegations in expressing my condolences to the families of the victims and to the American people following the terrorist act committed yesterday in New York City. Chad forcefully condemns that cowardly and ignoble act, and we express our solidarity to the American Government, as well as our sympathy to the Governments of Argentina and Belgium, which also lost nationals in that attack.

Chad aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Ecuador, Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire, respectively, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Group of African States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/72/PV.38). Nevertheless, I wish to make the following statement in my national capacity.

Chad welcomes the vote in favour of the resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (resolution 72/4). Chad, wishing, on the one hand, to safeguard respect for the principle of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States and, on the other, to preserve cooperative relations between States, was among the first countries to applaud the restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba.

With a view to encouraging the creation of favourable conditions for the consolidation of the progress made on the path towards the normalization of relations between the two States, Chad's most senior officials have advocated at every opportunity for the definitive lifting of the embargo imposed on Cuba. Most recently, during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chad, representing the President of the Republic, stated that:

> "Chad welcomed the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. There is no longer any obstacle to the normalization of relations between the two countries. My country believes, therefore, that maintaining the decades-long embargo against Cuba is unfair and counterproductive." (*A/72/PV.21, p. 18*).

It is in that spirit that Chad voted in favour of today's resolution. The overwhelming majority vote in favour of the resolution reinforces the position of my country, and that position, along with that of all Member States, seeks to extricate Cuba and its people from the current situation, which has undermined its economic efforts for decades.

Chad believes that the definitive lifting of the embargo imposed against Cuba would enable Cuba to make a greater contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the development of international trade and solidarity among States. The presence of Cuban doctors in Chad and other countries to ease the suffering of our peoples is concrete proof of the important role that that friendly country plays in international solidarity.

Chad therefore reiterates its appeal to the Government of the United States of America to follow the will of the international community as expressed by Member States.

Ms. Williams (Saint Kitts and Nevis): Saint Kitts and Nevis would like to express condolences to the United States, Argentina and Belgium in the light of the tragedy yesterday, and we condemn all acts of terrorism.

Saint Kitts and Nevis adds its voice in support of agenda item 42, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the

United States of America against Cuba", and wishes to give its reasons for voting in favour of resolution 72/4, adopted today by the majority of the membership of the United Nations (see A/72/PV.38). This is an extremely important debate that speaks to the very core of international law, the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention, and the strengthened role of the United Nations in international affairs.

Saint Kitts and Nevis has very good relations with the United States of America. It remains one of our closest and strongest partners, and we respect the role that the United States has played in international relations and in the establishment and promotion of the Organization. It is a global leader, and we acknowledge and remain grateful for its role in international affairs.

Nevertheless, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Venezuela, Ecuador and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of 77 and China, and the Caribbean Community, respectively (see A/72/PV.38). Saint Kitts and Nevis, in its contribution to the Secretary-General's report on this topic (A/72/94), advises that we do not support or implement any laws that affect the free flow of international trade. We also advise that we do not apply laws with extraterritorial effect, which impinge on the sovereignty of other States and the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction.

That is a principled position that extends to all States Members of the Organization. Saint Kitts and Nevis is therefore concerned that the embargo imposed on Cuba still persists. Cuba is a close ally of Saint Kitts and Nevis and has aided in the economic and social development of our country, especially in the areas of agriculture, education and health. Cuba could do even more internationally if the embargo were removed.

We consider the economic, commercial and financial embargo to be a burden imposed on our brothers and sisters in Cuba. The negative impact on the economy of that small island developing State is quite profound and unfair to the people of Cuba. No country should be left behind, especially at this critical time in history as we all strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. This is a time for international cooperation and the pooling of resources to assist one another as we face up to that great challenge.

That is why Saint Kitts and Nevis once again calls on the United States of America to remove the embargo against Cuba. The fact that the majority of Member States have traditionally voted in favour of the annual draft resolution on the topic signifies the overriding sentiment that the embargo is wrong on all levels. In that connection, we implore all Member States to respect the sanctity of the General Assembly and the decisions it takes. Failure to do that undermines the functioning of the United Nations system.

It is my delegation's hope that the two countries, Cuba and the United States, will be able to improve their relationship and embark upon a process of partnership and cooperation. We can learn a lot from one another, but the embargo remains an impediment to that process. That is why Saint Kitts and Nevis supported today's resolution 72/4. We reiterate our call on both countries to find common ground, so that the entire international community can move on from this impasse.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Brazil aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/72/PV.38). We would like to make the following comments in our national capacity.

On behalf of my delegation, I also warmly welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, to this important debate.

For decades, Brazil has advocated for the normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and Cuba. In that context, the Brazilian Government was delighted to follow the process of dialogue and the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries carried out in 2015 and 2016. We regret, therefore, the recent measures announced by the current Administration of the United States that seek to reinforce the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, including its extraterritorial dimensions.

From Brazil's point of view, the blockade represents an anachronistic policy that has negative effects not only for Cuba, but for our entire region. In addition to being a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, the blockade continues to negatively affect the welfare of the Cuban people, especially the most vulnerable.

The lifting of the embargo against Cuba is a universal cause and has the unwavering support of the

international community, as made explicit by the voting results on the resolutions on this topic in previous sessions of the General Assembly — particularly last year, when there were no votes against. The result of the voting this morning reiterates the solidarity of the international community with the people and the Government of Cuba.

My delegation hopes that dialogue and cooperation between the two countries will resume soon, with the aim of overcoming the setbacks to the process of normalizing bilateral relations and thereby leading to the end of the blockade.

Ms. Carrión (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we would like to join other delegations in condemning the terrorist attack that took place in this city yesterday, as well as to express our condolences to the victims from the United States, Argentina and Belgium.

We wish to welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla. We also express our gratitude for the report on today's agenda item presented by the Secretary-General (A/72/94).

Uruguay aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/72/PV.38).

As in previous years, Uruguay voted in favour of resolution 72/4, which once again this year was submitted by the delegation of Cuba on the understanding that the blockade against that country contravenes the rules of international law and is contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly with regard to the principles of non-intervention, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the legal equality of States.

As a matter of principle, Uruguay rejects and does not recognize in its national legislation any other State's extraterritorial application of domestic laws, as well as any direct or indirect mechanism that constitutes unilateral actions by a State with the objective of sanctioning the sovereign decisions of another State, whether it be political, economic, commercial, social, cultural or anything else in nature. In that regard, we condemn the application of unilateral coercive measures by the United States against Cuba.

Against that backdrop, our country considers that the sanctions imposed and the extraterritorial laws adopted against Cuba represent not only a violation of international law, but also have serious consequences for the economic development of that brotherly Caribbean country and constitute a way of depriving the Cuban people of their right to development, as well as unquantifiable, non-material damage to the dignity and sovereignty of the Cuban people.

By voting in favour of today's resolution, Uruguay reiterates its commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate and effective instrument for resolving disputes between States and for promoting international cooperation, human rights, security and understanding among peoples.

Ms. Yánez Loza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to join others in condemning yesterday's terrorist act and to offer my condolences, on behalf of the people and the Government of Ecuador, to the Governments of the United States, Belgium and Argentina, all of which suffered losses in the attack.

Speaking in its national capacity, and without prejudice to our role as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, my delegation aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/72/PV.38).

My delegation now wishes to comment on agenda item 42, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

As in previous years, we voted in favour of resolution 72/4. In accordance with the purposes, principles and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention and non-interference in States' internal affairs, which are also set out in our Constitution, Ecuador has consistently spoken in support of Cuba and for the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade that was imposed 55 years ago by the United States.

In thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the topic (A/72/94), we feel it necessary to emphasize that that document also shows the extent of the effects of the blockade and includes the almost universal call on the part of the members of the international community for those unilateral measures to cease.

We therefore regret that the blockade continues to be fully implemented and continues to tighten, regressing sharply from the policies adopted in 2015 and 2016 by the previous Administration of the United States.

We are concerned about the prolonged negative effects of the blockade, given its impact on the economy and development of Cuba and the obstacles it poses to the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to which we are all committed and for which we are all responsible. In that regard, we also recall the policy of solidarity and cooperation that Cuba has maintained for decades, particularly in matters of health emergencies. Once again, Ecuador calls for the immediate cessation of the unilateral measures imposed by the United States, as we are convinced that their elimination will benefit not only Cuba but the entire international community.

Mr. Ntonga (Zimbabwe): The delegation of Zimbabwe conveys sincere and heartfelt condolences to the United States, Argentina and Belgium on the loss of lives as a result of the horrific attack yesterday in New York City. Our thoughts and prayers go to the bereaved families in this time of loss, pain and sorrow.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Gabon on behalf of the Group of African States, respectively (see A/72/PV.38).

Together with 190 other countries, Zimbabwe voted in favour of resolution 72/4, because we firmly believe that the embargo against Cuba constitutes a violation of the principles of international law and the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The embargo also constitutes a violation of human rights, as it hurts the average Cuban person. It also infringes upon the rights of other countries to trade freely with Cuba.

Despite the embargo, Cuba has continued to play constructive roles in international affairs. There are many examples of Cuba's international statesmanship and good global citizenship. Africa can attest to the intervention by Cuba when the Ebola crisis broke out in West Africa in 2015 and the World Health Organization issued a global appeal for medical staff to help fight the crisis. Despite its own severe economic challenges as a result of the trade embargo, Cuba was among the first countries to respond, as it sent legions of doctors to the region to deal with the crisis.

We commend the people of Cuba for their resilience despite facing years of an unwarranted embargo.

The international community has once again spoken in favour of dialogue and cooperation. We hope that that humble and constructive message has been heard.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 42?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.